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## Philippines

**Post:** Manila

### Philippine El Nino Update

**Report Categories:**

Grain and Feed

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**Report Highlights:**

Drought-like conditions in Cagayan Valley located in the Northern Philippines have resulted in losses of 6.7 percent and 20 percent for rice and corn production in the region, respectively. The continued scarcity of rainfall is expected to further increase and accelerate Philippine rice and corn production losses.

**General Information:**

Isabela Province belongs to Cagayan Valley (Region II), the Philippine region with the highest corn output and occasionally, is the second highest rice producer. Isabela is also one of the first, if not the first, Philippine province to have been declared in a state of calamity as a result of the El Nino weather disturbance.

In a recent agricultural situation survey by Post in Region II, the effects of El Nino were observed to be more pronounced in the higher areas which are predominantly rainfed areas. The low lying areas had a comparatively better standing crop. In general terms, however, yields of both high and low farms are expected to be lower.

As of March 18, according to data from the Region II office of the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA), of the total of 272,000 hectares planted to rice in the region, 41 percent (112,000 hectares) were affected by drought-like conditions representing a production loss equivalent to about 139,000 MT of paddy. This volume represents roughly 11 percent of the first semester target production for the region or about 6.7 percent of the regional paddy output for the entire 2009.

For corn, of the total of 206,000 hectares planted in Cagayan Valley, 78 percent or 161,000 hectares were affected representing a production loss equivalent to about 327,000 MT. This represents 39 percent of the first semesters' corn target production for the region or 20 percent of the region's 2009 corn production output. There were also quality issues raised.

The performance of succeeding crop will largely be determined by the availability of water. A visit to the Magat Dam in Ramon, Isabela (the largest dam in the country and the source of irrigation of thousands of hectares in the region) revealed very low water levels (see Attachment). Water from Magat Dam reportedly can no longer supply irrigation water. The dam had likewise shut down its power generation operations.

While the March 18 report does not appear to be alarming, the situation changes daily as the losses accumulate as the days go by without rains. Rains in Isabela normally come in May and farmers have expressed their intentions of planting the next crop only when the rains arrive. The DA expects the El Nino to last through June, according to press reports.